



# WORKFORCE OBSERVATIONS

State of Wisconsin  
Department of Workforce Development  
Office of Economic Advisors

## FOR NORTHWEST WISCONSIN COUNTIES

ASHLAND, BAYFIELD, BURNETT, DOUGLAS, IRON, PRICE, RUSK, SAWYER, TAYLOR, WASHBURN

January  
2005

### Seasonal Job Losses Produce Higher Unemployment Rates in December

The December unemployment rate for Northwest Wisconsin of 5.6 percent is the lowest end-of-year rate the area has experienced in four years. The rate did increase from the 4.9 percent unemployed in November but was much lower than the 6.5 percent unemployed from December 2003.

December marks the third month of climbing unemployment

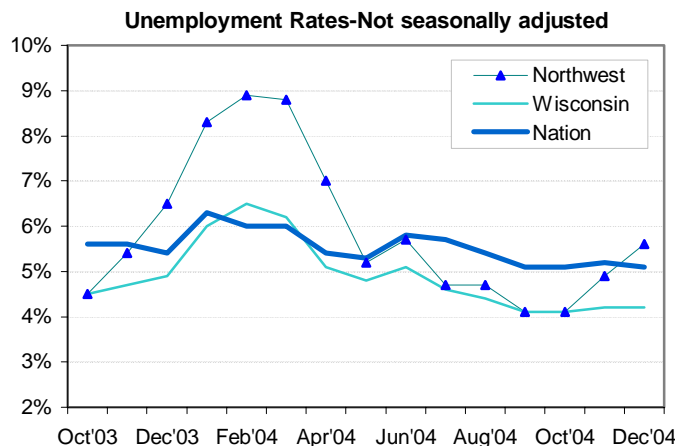
rates, a climb that will not peak until February or March when the seasonal employment cycle in the area begins again. In general, the state's northern counties show larger seasonal swings in employment and this is reflected in higher unemployment rates during the winter months.

Forty-nine of Wisconsin's 72 counties reported an increase in

unemployment rate from November to December including nine of the ten counties in Northwest Wisconsin. Price County, where the unemployment rate declined from 4.0 percent in November to 3.9 percent in December was among the fourteen counties that showed a reduction in unemployment rate during the month. The December unemployment rate for Wisconsin (not seasonally adjusted) did not change from 4.2 percent in November while the unemployment rate for the nation declined from 5.2 percent in November to 5.1 percent in December.

Only four counties in the state reported higher unemployment rates compared with one year ago including Burnett County in Northwest Wisconsin. The unemployment rate in Burnett County rose from 5.8 percent in December 2003 to 5.9 percent in December 2004.

Changes in labor force participation during the winter months are generally confined to reductions in employment that are reflected in increases in unemployment



	Oct'03	Nov'03	Dec'03	Oct'04	Nov'04	Dec'04
Northwest	4.5%	5.4%	6.5%	4.1%	4.9%	5.6%
Wisconsin	4.5%	4.7%	4.9%	4.1%	4.2%	4.2%
Nation	5.6%	5.6%	5.4%	5.1%	5.2%	5.1%

### Civilian Labor Force Estimates\* for Northwest Wisconsin counties: December 2004

	Ashland			Bayfield			Burnett			Douglas			Iron		
	Dec '04	Nov '04	Dec '03	Dec '04	Nov '04	Dec '03	Dec '04	Nov '04	Dec '03	Dec '04	Nov '04	Dec '03	Dec '04	Nov '04	Dec '03
Labor force	8,269	8,298	8,205	7,743	7,749	7,582	7,791	7,859	7,866	23,949	23,949	23,716	3,331	3,338	3,326
Employed	7,799	7,873	7,611	7,176	7,245	7,003	7,328	7,468	7,413	22,828	22,948	22,413	3,093	3,116	3,059
Unemployed	470	425	594	567	504	579	463	391	453	1,121	1,001	1,303	238	222	267
% unemployed	5.7	5.1	7.2	7.3	6.5	7.6	5.9	5.0	5.8	4.7	4.2	5.5	7.1	6.7	8.0

	Price			Rusk			Sawyer			Taylor			Washburn		
	Dec '04	Nov '04	Dec '03	Dec '04	Nov '04	Dec '03	Dec '04	Nov '04	Dec '03	Dec '04	Nov '04	Dec '03	Dec '04	Nov '04	Dec '03
Labor force	7,388	7,341	7,109	7,099	7,078	7,037	10,460	10,583	10,285	11,044	11,093	11,308	8,418	8,388	8,401
Employed	7,098	7,048	6,709	6,612	6,650	6,505	9,855	10,085	9,611	10,367	10,578	10,572	7,946	7,963	7,755
Unemployed	290	293	400	487	428	532	605	498	674	677	515	736	472	425	646
% unemployed	3.9	4.0	5.6	6.9	6.0	7.6	5.8	4.7	6.6	6.1	4.6	6.5	5.6	5.1	7.7

\* not seasonally adjusted

## Industry Employment Estimates for Northwest Wisconsin: Current month - December 2004

(Employment in thousands)	Ashland			Bayfield			Burnett			Douglas			Iron		
	Dec '04	Nov '04	Dec '03	Dec '04	Nov '04	Dec '03	Dec '04	Nov '04	Dec '03	Dec '04	Nov '04	Dec '03	Dec '04	Nov '04	Dec '03
Total Nonfarm	8.8	8.8	8.6	3.9	4.0	3.8	4.9	5.0	5.0	17.9	18.3	18.0	2.3	2.3	2.3
Const/Min'g/Nat. Resources	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.3	1.0	1.1	0.9	0.3	0.3	0.3
Manufacturing	1.3	1.3	1.3	0.1	0.1	0.1	1.0	1.0	1.0	0.8	0.8	0.9	0.3	0.3	0.3
Trade	1.1	1.1	1.1	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.6	0.6	0.6	3.2	3.2	3.2	0.4	0.4	0.4
Transportation & Utilities	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	2.2	2.3	2.1	0.1	0.1	0.0
Financial Activities	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.1	0.1	0.1
Education & Health Services	1.7	1.7	1.7	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.6	0.6	0.6	2.1	2.1	2.0	0.3	0.3	0.3
Leisure & Hospitality	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.6	0.6	0.6	2.3	2.3	2.2	0.4	0.3	0.3
Info, Prof/Bus.Srv, Othr Srv.	0.8	0.9	0.8	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.4	2.8	2.8	3.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Total Government	2.0	2.0	2.0	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.3	1.3	1.4	3.1	3.3	3.1	0.4	0.4	0.4

	Price			Rusk			Sawyer			Taylor			Washburn		
	Dec '04	Nov '04	Dec '03	Dec '04	Nov '04	Dec '03	Dec '04	Nov '04	Dec '03	Dec '04	Nov '04	Dec '03	Dec '04	Nov '04	Dec '03
Total Nonfarm	6.9	6.8	6.5	5.9	5.9	5.7	7.0	7.1	6.8	9.1	9.3	9.2	6.2	6.2	6.1
Const/Min'g/Nat. Resources	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3
Manufacturing	2.5	2.5	2.4	1.9	2.0	1.9	0.5	0.5	0.5	2.8	2.8	2.9	0.9	0.9	0.9
Trade	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.6	0.6	0.6	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.0	1.0	1.0
Transportation & Utilities	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.2	0.2	0.2
Financial Activities	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2
Education & Health Services	0.9	0.8	0.8	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.6	0.6	0.6	1.0	1.0	1.0	0.9	0.9	0.9
Leisure & Hospitality	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.7	0.7	0.6
Info, Prof/Bus.Srv, Othr Srv.	0.6	0.6	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.5	0.7	0.8	0.8	1.3	1.3	1.2	0.5	0.5	0.5
Total Government	1.1	1.0	1.0	1.4	1.4	1.4	2.1	2.1	2.0	1.0	1.1	1.0	1.5	1.4	1.5

Current month preliminary. Estimates based on March 2003 benchmark. Summing from unrounded numbers.

ment. In December in Northwest Wisconsin, the number of residents with jobs declined by 870 from 90,970 in November to 90,100 in December while the number unemployed increased by 700 to 5,390 in December.

Most of the job reductions occurred as construction workers was

laid off for the season. There were 400 fewer jobs with construction employers in the northwest region which reduced the total number of construction jobs declined from 4,200 in November to 3,800 in December.

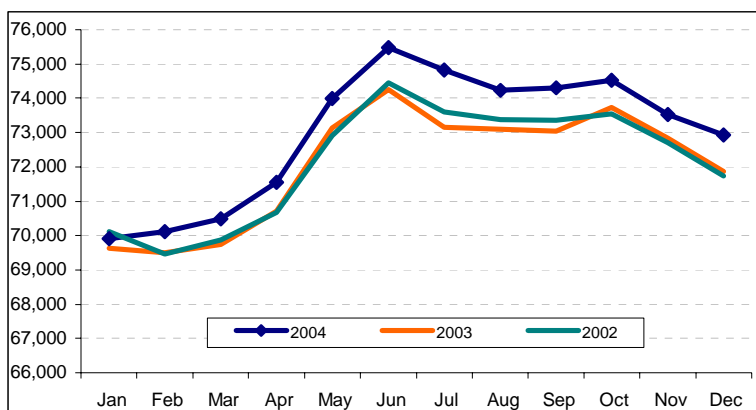
Employers in the information, professional, business, and other services

industry group laid off 145 workers, but most of the loss occurred in Douglas and Sawyer counties. This group includes a variety of employers but in these two counties the employment reductions probably involved workers in telemarketing and landscape services.

Overall, there were 600 fewer non-farm jobs in Northwest Wisconsin in December. The ten-county total in December of 72,900 was down from November but over the twelve-month period employers in the region added over 1,000 jobs. Employers in every major industry group, except those in information, professional, business, and other services, added jobs during the last twelve months.

Since December 2003 employers in transportation and utility added 240 jobs, leisure and hospitality employers added 230 jobs, and employers in construction and natural resources added 210 jobs.

**Total Nonfarm Jobs in Northwest**



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